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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted in a Korean language preschool in Koreatown, Los Angeles, California which used student-teacher interactions to examine how a teacher's use of deixis socializes children about what constitutes good eating practices and what cultivates them. The data for this paper came from a larger study of language socialization practices, specifically looking at how children are introduced to local ideologies of appropriate social self in the Korean-American preschool. The paper first introduces the research site, then briefly goes over four different types of discourse strategies used in socializing children into certain social rules, and discusses the last type with transcribed video data that relates to the topic of the paper, teacher's use of deixis. It explains that there are four classes in the preschool, more or less corresponding to the age of the children, and it states that four different discourse strategies employed by the Korean preschool teachers were observed: statement of rules; rhetorical questions; teasing; and personalized statement. (NKA)

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By Namhee Han

Paper presented at the Western States Communication Association Annual Conference
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Socialization of Good Eating Habits through deixis in a Preschool by Namhee Han

Children grow through diverse speech events in homes, schools, and other community settings, learning ways of doing things with words. There has been an explosion in the amount of literature looking at language behaviors that are explicitly or implicitly socialized and discourse strategies that are used in introducing children to local ideologies of appropriate 'personhood' or definition of social self in various social contexts. In other words, language functions as a primary symbolic system for social activities (Heath 1983; Corsaro 1985; Demuth 1986; Schieffelin & Ochs 1986) and as a central tool in "mediating a cultural sense of being" (Budwig, 2000).

This presentation, based on video data of teacher-student interactions in a Korean language preschool in Koreatown, Los Angeles, examines how teacher' use of deixis socializes children about what constitutes good eating practices and cultivate them. The data for this presentation come from a larger study of language socialization practices, specifically looking at how children are introduced to local ideologies of appropriate social self in the Korean-American preschool.

I will first introduce my research site, briefly go over four different types of discourse strategies used in socializing children into certain social rules, and discuss the last type with a transcribed video data that relates to the topic of this talk, teacher's use of deixis.

My research site is a small private Korean preschool in Koreatown, which is run by a first-generation Korean immigrant woman, Ms. Kim. The first floor of her two-story house along with an annex in the backyard is used for this Christian school.

This preschool has four classes as the table shows in the handout. Yellow or Baby Class is for 2 to 2 ½ year olds during toilet training. After toilet training, children move up to Green class, and later to Blue Class, which is for pre-kindergartners. This preschool also has one class for older children after school. Korean is use as a primary language for Yellow and Green classes, and English becomes a main medium of instruction for Pre-Kindergartners.

	Yellow (Baby Class)	Green	Blue (Pre-K)	Rainbow (After-School)
Target Age	2 yrs – 2 ½ yrs (toilet training)	3 yrs (post toilet training)	4 yrs	Kindergarteners & 1st-3rd graders

[Four Classes in Korean Language Preschool]

Discourse Strategies in Socialization of Rules/ Desirable Behaviors

I have observed discourse strategies that Korean preschool teachers employ to socialize desirable behaviors.

(1) Statement of Rules

First, preschool teachers were sometimes observed to literally make general statements of social rules. Baby Class teacher was once heard to remind a young child of a rule during lunchtime: (Read Korean, Vocative, topic, commital sentence ending, which roughly translates to 'you know that, right?', thus inviting the hearer's compliance, which we see hear in the girl's response). The teacher uses the modal *dwe* ('should') to present a code of conduct for mealtime.

u-huh semi-ya mamma mok-ul tte-nun ttodul-myon an-**dwe**-ji
uh-uh name-VOC meal eat-VC time-TOP chat-if not-**should**-COMMITAL
T: Uh-uh, Semi, one should not chat when eating meals (you know that, right?)

ne
yes
S: Yes (i.e., you're right).

(2) Rhetorical Questions

Rhetorical Questions are another type of socialization strategy observed in preschool:

"Did I tell you to pee in your pants or not"

"Did I tell you to play tricks?"

The answers are 'pretty' obvious. The logic of this kind of rhetorical question goes like this: 'You have done something inappropriate. Teacher has never told you to do such a thing, but rather told you not to. Haven't I? You know that. But then how come you go against it?', thus shaming the transgressor. One does not need to limit comments to the past as we see in this example: "Do you have to be quiet or not when the babies are taking a nap?"

(3) Teasing

Teasing was frequently used by teachers. Once, while teaching bowing hello to adults, Baby Class teacher said "Somebody is bowing ***like this***" while imitating the inappropriate way that the unidentified someone bows. In another occasion, Green Class teacher was talking to the researcher about a boy who was having lunch next to her: "He is handsome, isn't he?" Then she turned to the boy and said, "But the thing is that he does not listen to teachers" while patting the boy, who was intended to hear this utterance.

T: But then, somebody is (dancing) ***like this***

T: He is handsome, isn't he ((to the researcher)). But the problem is that he does not listen to teachers ((while patting the boy)).

(4) Personalized Statement

Green Class teacher often used this strategy, which I call 'personalized statement', where teachers state their positive or negative attitudes toward a certain behavior. For example, the Green Class teacher, seeing a few children fighting, said the following sentence:

ssaoo-nun go na sir-o
fight-VC thing I hate-InfEnd (informal ending)
I hate fighting

She was picking up toys on the floor and was not even facing the fighting children. The teacher could have said, "Stop fighting!," which is very direct in its meaning. In contrast, "I hate fighting" implies that the teacher does not like this particular fight at the moment as well as fights in general, and that those children fighting now would not be liked by her, which children need to understand.

Desirable or undesirable attributes can be introduced using deixes, particularly demonstratives such as 'this' like in the following example, which will be further discussed:

(While giving out cut-up fruit after lunch, Green Class teacher says)

"Teacher likes people the most who eat ***things like this*** a lot."

Here a similar logical understanding applies as well, i.e., 'I will be liked if I eat this kind of thing a lot.' In this example, the concept of a desirable behavior is effectively delivered by the use of demonstratives, ***this***. Demonstratives are a type of deixis, which reflects the interrelationship between language and context of speech event (Levinson 1983). In educational settings for young children, in particular, deixis can be a powerful tool to communicate diverse concepts since deictic terms help to define referents through the use of concrete objects or behaviors that are contextually relevant to the students in a given moment.

For the remaining time, I will present a short discourse segment that the fruit example comes from. It is toward the end of lunch hour, when typically Rainbow or After-school class arrive to join lunch with younger children after school. Thus, the video data show a mixed group of Green, blue and Rainbow Classes. Green Class teacher brings cut-up fruit for dessert. Her encouraging utterances like "Thank you" for those who eat fruit and the aforementioned personalized statement like "Teacher likes those the most who eat things like this a lot" invite more children raise hands for

fruit dessert. We will take a moment now to see this video clip. You will see the teacher toward the left on the screen with a basket.

Transcript: Teacher Likes People the Most who Eat Things like this a Lot

banana mok-ul saram
banana eat-VC people
1 T: Does anybody want banana?

2 S: Me

3 T: Thank you ((while giving out fruit to a girl))

sunsengnim-un **irun go** mani mok-nun saram jeil joaha-e
teacher-TOP **like.this thing** a.lot eat-VC people most like-InfEnd
4 T: Teacher likes people the most who eat **things like this** a lot. : **Personalized Statement**

tto joo-se-yo
again give-A.HON-HonE [A.HON: Addressee Honorifics, HonE: Honorific Ending]
5 S: Give (me) more.

na-do-yo
I-too-HonE
6 S: Me too.
(….)

mani mok-nun saram jeil ippo-ha-e
a.lot eat-VC people most pretty-do-InfEnd
7 T: I really like people the most who eat a lot (of fruit): **Personalized Statement**

tto mok-ulle-yo
again eat-FUT-HonE [FUT: Future]
8 S : I am going to eat (fruit) again.

owoo na-nun mani mok-nun saram nomoo ippo-ha-e
wow I-TOP a.lot eat-VC people extremely pretty-do-InfEnd
9 T: Wow, I REALLY like people who eat a lot (of fruit): **Personalized Statement**

na-do mani mok-oso-yo
I-too a.lot eat-PAST-Hon.E
10 S: I ate a lot (of fruit) too.

The teacher first asks, "Does anybody want banana?" (line 1). A few children show interest. While handing out some to a girl, she says, "Thank you" to her for having fruit (line 3). This

interaction between the teacher and a girl generates more interest among the children. 'Take a piece of fruit after meal, and Teacher will appreciate it. You are a good boy or a girl who takes responsibility in practicing good things even when you are not told to do so.' It is not transcribed in a great detail but more hands go up for fruit.

Teacher adds to more comments in line 4, "Teacher likes people the most who eat things like this a lot". As observed in "I hate fighting" example, names of particular students are not mentioned. This personalized statement in line 4 would need to be interpreted as 'The teacher will like me if I eat fruit a lot.' In fact, shortly after this comment, more students ask for fruit ("Give me more", "Me too" in lines 5-6).

The teacher begins to talk about greeting people (such as the researcher) at the preschool, but soon after, she makes another personalized statement about eating healthy dessert (line 7: "I really like people the most who eat a lot of fruit"). The verb 'like' in line 7 is a rough translation of this verb 'ippo-ha' (*ippo* is an adjective meaning 'pretty/cute/lovable/adorable' and *ha* is a verb suffix do/perform).'

Korean teachers in this preschool very frequently use this adjective 'ippo' when children manage to do something teachers have taught (like finishing one's meal as compared to playing with other children, or making up with friends after a fight). Or simply out of affection for young children who develop quasi- mom and daughter/son relationship with their teachers. Baby Class literally call their teacher 'mom' and the teacher sometimes refer to them as her own sons and daughters. Expressing affection with words (pretty/ adorable) or gestures (hugging/ kissing/ patting) is frequently seen in this small preschool.

Going back to the transcript, the assessment through personalized statement makes more children volunteer to eat more fruit (line 8: "I am going to eat fruit again"). The teacher's affective tone becomes elated with the use of exclamation *wow* and degree adverb *nomoo* 'extremely' (line 9). It is interesting to see the reaction of another child after this praise: "I ate a lot, too." This shows that she wants to ensure that the teacher has not forgotten the fact that she ate a lot as well as the other child and thus she deserves the same kind of recognition and love from the teacher. This is accomplished by including her in the category of 'people with good eating habits' and thus demonstrating the understanding of her role as a responsible agent in daily eating routine.

In sum, I have discussed a role of deixis imbedded in personalized statement in socializing children into good eating habits in a Korean language preschool.